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DEPT FOR AF/SPG AND DRL

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TAGS: [PGOV PHUM PREL SOCI KWMN SU](#)
SUBJECT: SUDAN: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN/NGO ACT: NO PROGRESS

IN SIGHT

REF: KHARTOUM 00669

Classified By: P/E Chief E.Whitaker Reason: Section 1.4 (b) & (d)

1. (C) Summary: On April 26 the Sub-Joint Implementation Mechanism (SUB-JIM) met to discuss Sudan's progress on combating violence against women (VAW). Overall, the Government of National Unity (GNU) believes that it has almost fulfilled its legal obligation to combat violence against women. The UN highlighted that the South Darfur Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Committee had visited police stations outside of Nyala; where they determined that there had been no change in the situation. The UN reported that the South Darfur SGBV Committee said police stations were unaware of Amended Circular 2 (legal framework to separate the legal and medical tracks for SGBV victims), lacked the knowledge to properly register cases of SGBV, failed to create a private space for women in police stations, had a low registration of rape cases, and did not have logistical support to conduct investigations. The European Commission (EC) representative also raised the recent closure of an EC-funded national NGO due to the retroactive application of the NGO Act. End Summary.

SGBV Committees Not Functioning; Interim Steps not Taken

2. (C) The April 26 SUB-JIM, led by UNMIS Human Rights Chair Ravindran Daniel and GNU Advisory Council for Human Rights (ACHR) Rapporteur Dr. Abdelmoniem Taha, was attended by representatives from the African Union and the Dutch, British, and German embassies. Daniel began the meeting by highlighting that, although, the South Darfur GBV Committee had visited five police stations outside of Nyala town, the situation in South Darfur had not improved. He added that the Committee members had observed that the police outside of Nyala town lacked knowledge on the proper registration procedures for SGBV cases, failed to create a private space for women in police stations, had a low registration of rape cases, and lacked logistical support to conduct SGBV investigations. These were the four interim steps that the South Darfur State SGBV Committee had agreed to address in March (see reftel). Furthermore, instead of aiming to document and highlight SGBV problems, Daniel said that the Committee was more interested in downplaying the scope of the problem. He said that, although the South Darfur SGBV Committee was functioning, the West Darfur SGBV Committee met irregularly and had not planned nor implemented any programs. The North Darfur SGBV Committee was not functioning.

3. (C) Dr. Abdel Moniem Taha responded by saying that establishing SGBV committees in each of the three Darfur states was a commendable first step. The next step, he said, should be to establish a clear mandate for the SGBV Committees and a unified understanding of their roles. In his opinion, the government had almost "fulfilled its legal mandate to combat violence against women (VAW) and had done a commendable step in amending the legal requirements for victims." Dr. Taha cited a decrease in rape as evidence that the Plan of Action to combat VAW was effective. In addition, Dr. Taha said that he was concerned about the lack of involvement by NGOs and tribal and religious leaders to address SGBV. The GNU, he said, was waiting for the international community, the African Union, and NGOs to progress forward on the Plan of Action. The NGOs had a duty to report cases to the SBV Comoittees to trancfEr th@m"tkQt'e DstribT Atv0vneyl(he(dde|/ iCmmf-tz(!Dyrin8hisQ-Q2e`5tij, Db&Tai ga wQsbl9 v-k/mf NlaKjggvNq.--Q/!h-+1.?,%#!Q/.Q-%m-,=!] 'Q.Q5-' n5(Qh=I5"mQ(gQ|G/dfo*'Qocyj9UQF!Qoq\$Qaw(>eMn] H#Q~():=3)3MQQ+Qm\NAQ+Qmmunity to fulfill its responsibility in the Plan of Action. Poloff also raised the April 25 press conference by the new Director of Police, Lt General Mahjoub Hassan Saad, in which he refuted "Western mass media" allegations about crimes of rape in Darfur, saying those allegations were unfounded. In response, Dr. Taha said that the GNU had acknowledged there was a problem by creating a Plan of Action and a unit to combat violence against women. He dismissed the press conference, saying that the Director General was newly appointed to the Ministry of Interior.

IN SIGHT

Retroactive Application of the NGO Act

¶5. (SBU) The European Commission (EC) representative, Luca Perttoni, raised the NGO Act and the recent closure of the national NGO &Women Awareness Raising Group⁸ (AWOON-Red Sea). On April 20, the women's activist organization was suspended for reportedly not registering its program proposal with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) prior to receiving funding from the EC. Perttoni stated that the AWOON-Red Sea proposed their program over two years ago and it was funded by the EC before the enactment of the Act. Dr. Taha responded by saying that the government had a right to know about the funding for NGOs to prevent &hands of foreign intervention in Sudan.⁸ Perttoni highlighted that a letter had been forwarded to the ACHR for action regarding the closure of AWOON-Red Sea.

STEINFELD